Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Modern Greek (4MG0) Paper 1

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General comments

The majority of candidates performed very well and provided competent translations, from English into Greek and vice versa. There was evidence of very good knowledge of vocabulary, both in the translation and the essay questions and many responses demonstrated excellent communicative competence, in terms of grammatical knowledge of syntax and morphology, as well as fluency and lexical appropriateness.

Occasionally, mistakes occurred regarding the conventions of orthography and indication of the position of the stress. There were some unfortunate violations concerning the letters of the Greek alphabet, for example u instead of υ and t instead of τ. A fair number of students, including the ones with very good language skills, ignored the rule that requires that every Greek multisyllabic word carries stress on one of its three final syllables. In English, a pattern was also observed, whereby the superscript dot appearing above the letters i and j became an asterisk or a circle. Students are advised against such practices; they are evidence of inaccuracy and they are not appropriate in a formal examination.

In relation to translation, both from English into Greek and vice versa, candidates should note that even though they may consider in their draft responses various options regarding choice of word or structure, the final copy should not contain alternatives (e.g. βουναλάκι/ύψωμα/λόφος). When this happens, the examiner only marks the first word in a series of alternatives.

In this exam series there was an improvement regarding adherence to the rubrics and the vast majority of candidates observed the word limit.

Comments on individual questions are as follows:

Question 1

The majority of candidates scored very good marks in this section. Many students produced competent translations and achieved a minimum of 15 marks out of 20, with few grammatical inaccuracies and only occasional wrong use of vocabulary. Despite evidence of such occasional errors, the translations usually communicated the sense of the source text correctly. The challenges encountered by a small number of candidates were mainly restricted to a couple of words and did not usually affect the communicative efficiency of the translations seriously. Some found words like *hill, top collections* and *steak* challenging, whereas many failed to construct the correct case in the phrase "the central market". These were often the differentiating issues between an excellent and a competent translation.

A good number of able students produced excellent translations of the first

two paragraphs, with some inconsistencies regarding the imperatives which were rendered in the 2nd personal singular and 2nd person plural, within the same paragraph. The last paragraph seemed to pose a challenge which for the most part was met by the candidates in a manner that ranged from average to good. The words *locals* and *market* were sometimes translated with words that were not the appropriate ones (e.g. *γείτονες, κατάστημα*) but which nevertheless managed to convey a fair sense of what the source text was about.

Questions 2a and 2b

Most responses showed evidence of fluency and satisfactory awareness of grammar. In most cases, transfer of meaning from Greek into English communicated the essence of the source text consistently and showed that the candidate was in control of meaning, despite slips in the construction of certain structures. Questions 2a and 2b did not pose any difficulty lexically but did so syntactically, especially 2b. Word order is a common issue among speakers of Greek and the most frequently encountered error had to do with patterns of inversion in the construction of questions and word order in indirect questions. This was the differentiating factor between levels of ability in questions 2a and 2b.

Question 2a

Translations of question 2(a) showed fluent command of vocabulary and idioms, good language awareness and quite often good application of the grammatical system. Most candidates achieved at least 15 marks out of 20. Less able candidates found the direct questions in 2(a) challenging and failed to form the inversion that is necessary for differentiating between affirmative and interrogative sentences in English (e.g. "what my teacher will be called" versus "what will my teacher be called?"). Some consistent patterns of wrong choice of vocabulary emerged in relation to the phrase "Να κοιμηθεί νωρίς το βράδυ, για να είναι ξεκούραστη». Candidates with good language awareness in English successfully used the modal auxiliary "should" in their translations, to indicate an appropriate recommendation (e.g. she should go to bed early…). Surprisingly, the high frequency word *ξεκούραστη* was often translated as "untired" or "relaxed".

With regard to vocabulary, the following items seemed to pose some difficulty.

- «τη μεγαλώνουμε» was often mistranslated as "we grow her" instead of the correct «we bring her up». In English, you may "grow vegetables" but you "bring up people"

- «στο Δημοτικό» was often mistranslated as "Secondary school" instead of the correct "Primary school"

- «σαλόνι» was often mistranslated as "saloon" instead of the correct "sitting-room"

- «..εμείς δεν ανησυχούμε λιγότερο...» proved to be challenging for many candidates. Some found acceptable roundabout ways to translate the phrase ("we worry a lot…"). Occasionally, some candidates constructed a phrase which in fact negated the meaning of the source text (e.g. "we also don't worry at all").

Question 2b

This question proved more challenging than question 2a and the mean mark of most candidates' performance was slightly lower than in 2a. The challenge was not lexical, as the majority handled the translation of individual words successfully. Word order and tense formation in the following two sentences was the most obvious pattern that indicated morphological and syntactical inaccuracies. «Τι καλά θα ήτανε...στην πλατεία!» and «Πόσο καλύτερα ... καθαρό αέρα!». Many candidates inversed the pattern and turned these sentences into questions "How would it be…?" instead of "how nice it would be". Some employed the wrong tense and thus changed the meaning of the source text (e.g. "how well we would have felt…").

Some students used the incorrect "stayed" instead of "lived" in their translation of the sentence «εμείς που μένουμε».

Question 3

Question 3 has traditionally been the strong point of the majority of candidates and this year again many candidates achieved good marks. Most of this year's cohort gained at least 30 marks out of 40.

Adherence to rubric was largely observed and it was welcome to see so many respecting the word limit and writing well-structured and largely relevant responses, with evidence of ability to describe, explain and expand. Responses to question 3 were generally successful, fluent and to the point, with some evidence of misunderstanding of questions 3(a) and 3(b).

Question 3(a) was by far the most popular. Students wrote compelling essays, offering cogent arguments for and against social media, giving a balanced account before they offered their own valid conclusion. Good responses also gave an introduction explaining the various types of social media and how they are used. Some students disregarded the main focus of the question and offered some rather one-dimensional and often irrelevant, pre-learnt accounts of the benefits and perils of the internet or of technology in general.

Question 3(b) was the third most popular question. May students wrote apt, personalized narratives about the changes they would like to make in their personal lives. Some students were a little off-topic when they wrote entirely about things in their past that should not have happened, whereas some wrote accounts that were so focused on general changes in the world (e.g. ending world hunger) that they failed to show how this would have an impact on their own life and change it.

Very few candidates attempted 3(c), which ended up being the least preferred question. Those who did wrote compelling, excellent descriptions that were a pleasure to read.

Question 3(d) was the second most popular and yielded mostly pertinent, interesting and well put together responses that compared ways of life and cultural practices during two different periods of time. Examiners read many enjoyable accounts about the delights of a bygone life, the now lost values of the time when the candidates' grandparents' were young but also the comparative ease and speed with which we accomplish tasks in today's world. Unfortunately, a small number of candidates viewed this as an opportunity to talk about the internet and technology (again) and focused their attention on one distinguishing difference between then and now. These essays were considered as one-dimensional attempts, which contained many omissions and some irrelevance.

Few candidates chose question 3(e), which invited description and evaluation pertaining to a healthy life style that strikes a balance between school work and fun. This seemed to be a topic close to the candidates' heart and most wrote clear, credible guidance.

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